

REMARKS

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for considering the pending application. The Office Action dated February 20, 2008 has been received and its contents carefully reviewed.

Claims 5, 10, 19 and 24 have been amended. Claims 1-4 and 15-18 have been canceled. No new matter has been added. Currently claims 5-14 and 19-28 are pending. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the pending claims.

Initially, Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 5-14 and 19-28 contain allowable subject matter.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-4 and 15-18 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamaguchi et al. (US 2001/0052949) in view of Suzuki et al. (US 6,333,769).

Applicants respectfully disagree that the claims are unpatentable. However, in the interest of expediting prosecution, Applicants have canceled claims 1-4 and 15-18.

Applicants have amended claims 5 and 10 to incorporate the subject matter of claims 1-4. As such, amended claims 5 and 10 are now allowable over the cited references. Claims 6-9 and 11-14 variously depend on either claim 5 or claim 10 and thus are allowable over the cited references at least for the same reasons as claims 5 and 10.

Applicants have amended claim 19 to incorporate the subject matter of claims 15-18. As such, amended claim 19 is now allowable over the cited references. Claims 20-28 variously depend on claim 19 and thus are allowable over the cited references at least for the same reasons as claim 19.

Applicants further note that claim 24 has been amended solely to maintain consistency with independent claim 19.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection. Applicants believe the foregoing amendments place the application in condition for allowance and early, favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of these rejections. If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. §1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911.

Dated: May 13, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

By Valerie P. Hayes
Valerie P. Hayes
Registration No.: 53,005
McKENNA LONG & ALDRIDGE LLP
1900 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 496-7500
Attorneys for Applicant